



lakewood

25 years of community

winter
2021



Holiday Light Parade | Senior Activity Center | Homelessness | Roundabouts

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City of Lakewood, Washington

6000 Main Street SW
Lakewood, WA 98499

Sign Up for Lakewood News

Our weekly email newsletter covers important news, upcoming events, construction updates, and more.



Don't Miss City Events

Visit the official City of Lakewood Calendar to see upcoming events, and add the calendar to GCal, Outlook, or iCal.



Report Neighborhood Issues

Report potholes, code violations, and other nuisances to MyLakewood311. You'll be notified as we work on your issue.



Follow Us on Social Media

Find Lakewood on social media to stay current. We're on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Reddit, YouTube, and LinkedIn.



About the Cover:

The City of Lakewood celebrated its 25th Anniversary this fall. It was a gorgeous day to celebrate a quarter-century of history and community.

Your City Council



Don Anderson
Mayor



Jason Whalen
Deputy Mayor



Mary Moss
Councilmember



Mike Brandstetter
Councilmember



Patti Belle
Councilmember



Linda Farmer
Councilmember



Paul Bocchi
Councilmember

This year concludes a quarter-century of shared history. Progress has defined the twenty-five years that have passed since Lakewood's incorporation in 1996. We made significant progress together in 2021, despite its challenges.

This last year saw a continued emphasis on infrastructure improvements with investments focused on improving roads, adding more sidewalks, and installing streetlights as well as expanding sewer service in Tillicum.

Public safety continues to be a key priority. Your police department continues to reduce crime, and demonstrated transparency by installing vehicle cameras in every patrol vehicle and body cameras on each patrol officer beginning in early 2022.

Lakewood is famous for its gorgeous parks. The city built upon that legacy this year with substantial improvements of Harry Todd Park and Fort Steilacoom Park to include an all-abilities playground coupled with the expansion of Springbrook Park. Looking ahead to 2022, we plan to expand Wards Lake Park, improve accessibility at American Lake Park, make more improvements at Springbrook Park and bring turf infields to Fort Steilacoom Park.

A crowning promise of incorporation was responsiveness. You want a government that listens and responds to problems with solutions.

As the pandemic drags on, so do its health and economic effects. Homelessness continues to be a regional and national challenge. Housing is becoming more and more expensive. The consequences of climate change are increasingly apparent.

On each of these issues, your city is listening and taking action. By contributing to the purchase of a local hotel for shelter space, revising the tree code, adopting the Lakewood Station District Subarea Plan and adopting a climate change policy, your city council continues to make steady, meaningful steps to address these issues.

We don't do this work alone. We are your representatives, and your voice is welcome in these conversations. Weigh in on the new ISSUES section of the website (pg. 12). Write us. Reach out.

As the holidays approach, it's an opportunity to take stock. We are grateful for family, health, and hope. We are grateful to live in Lakewood, and for the diverse and vibrant community that we share. Happy Holidays, Lakewood.



Staff Spotlight

Shannon Bennett & Martha Larkin, CDBG Program Coordinators

Many people suffered financially during the pandemic, and housing seemed to get more and more expensive. Shannon and Martha helped Lakewood families apply for rent assistance. "Asking for help can be humbling," said one applicant. "Shannon showed me compassion and empathy."



Holiday Parade of Lights

Saturday, Dec. 11 from 4:00 – 8:00 p.m. at Fort Steilacoom Park

Celebrate the holidays from the warmth and comfort of your car – the City of Lakewood will host a free drive-thru light parade on Saturday, December 11.

Turn on the heat and set your stereo to play holiday tunes as you drive down a festive path through Fort Steilacoom Park. The path will be lined with dozens of brilliant holiday light displays made by the community.

West Pierce Fire & Rescue will deck out a ladder truck with Christmas lights. JBLM's 2nd Stryker Brigade will adorn one of their famous armored troop transports.

Many other local businesses and organizations will have holiday displays of their own.

Santa, Frosty the Snowman, and more of your favorite characters will be there to greet you. There is no cost to attend and no tickets are required – just drive up.

Fort Steilacoom Park will close at 2:00 p.m. on the day of the event as we prepare the parade

route and holiday displays.

Parade visitors will enter from the southeast corner of the park; take Hipkins and turn onto Angle Lane to enter. Visitors will leave the event through the outlet onto Steilacoom Blvd – this one-way route should keep traffic moving nice and smooth.

<https://cityoflakewood.us/holiday-parade/>



Enter Hipkins, then turn onto Angle Lane to approach the event. Exit on Steilacoom.



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Monday, Jan. 18, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. on YouTube

Every year, the City remembers the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to advocate for justice and equality.

In 2021, we heard voices from across the community speak on one of Dr. King's most treasured lines, "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

In 2022, our theme is "The World Lives in Lakewood", a nod to an inclusive mural made by Clover Park High School students.

Kindly sponsored by:  Virginia Mason
Franciscan Health



Reel Life '96 Film Contest

Registration open through Jan. 5. Contest begins Feb. 5.

The City of Lakewood will host its first-ever short film contest this winter. The event will be a 96-hour scramble for teams to make a 5-minute film based on a theme to be announced.

Aspiring filmmakers of any age or level of experience are invited. You don't need expertise or special gear - you just need a few friends and a little creativity. All are welcome.

Films will be judged in three age groups: 13 & under, 14-18, and 19 & over. Even younger kids can join the movie-making fun. Teams should register under the category that best represents the majority of their team.

Teams may have up to 15 members and must register by Wednesday, Jan. 5. There is a registration fee of \$50 per team. Every registered team will receive a t-shirt and a ticket to the final screening event on Saturday, Mar. 19.

On Saturday, Feb. 5, teams will attend an orientation to learn the contest rules and theme. The competition will officially begin on Thursday, Feb. 10 and films must be submitted by Monday, Feb. 14 at 5:00 p.m. That leaves just 96 hours for teams to race to produce a film based on the theme.

The contest promises to be an exciting, and challenging creative experiment.

On Saturday, Mar. 19, a final screening party and awards ceremony will be held at the McGavick Center at Clover Park Technical College. Every participant will get the chance to see their film debut on the big screen. Awards will be given to recognize great films, scripts, direction, performances, cinematography, sound, and editing. Winners may take home cash prizes up to \$500, gift cards, and more.

<https://cityoflakewood.us/film96/>





Lakewood Senior Activity Center to Reopen in 2022

The Lakewood Senior Activity Center closed in March 2020 due to COVID-19. The Pierce County Superior Court has used it since. We have good news – Pierce County plans to allow the Senior Activity Center back.

The timing is uncertain, but the Lakewood Senior Activity Center will reopen soon.

That is great news for Lakewood seniors. Activity and connection are more important than ever.

Throughout the pandemic, our staff have organized fun activities for older adults. **The Knotty Knitters** enjoy crochet and knitting. **The Happy Bookers** gather to discuss literature. We also host walks in the parks and coffee meetups for the guys.

The goal of the Lakewood Senior Activity Center is to offer a place to exercise, connect, and have a good time. We look forward to resuming our exercise classes, art & computer programs, and social events once the center reopens.

To learn more about the reopening or upcoming activities, call Elizabeth & Debbie at (253) 798-4090 or email escheid@cityoflakewood.us.

<https://cityoflakewood.us/senior-center>



Inge Ivey



Erika Elgin

Inge Ivey and Erika Elgin are two of Lakewood's most prolific knitters.

Both have a passion for needlework of all kinds: they love to knit, sew, crochet, and embroider. That's why they joined the Knotty Knitters club.

Over the years, Inge has knitted and donated more than 1,500 hats for newborns at local hospitals. Erika loves to make sweaters for kids in need.

Both grew up in Germany and learned to sew and crochet at an early age. Erika has been knitting for more than 80 years.

"Even though we are older, we still like to have a little fun," says Erika.

ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS



Agents of Discovery

Solve challenges and explore augmented reality in Lakewood parks through the Agents of Discovery app.

Download “Agents of Discovery” from the Google Play Store or the Apple App Store, then visit Springbrook Park or Fort Steilacoom Park to attempt a challenge.

App store reviews are positive – families say that kids of all ages have enjoyed collecting badges and learning about nature.

Complete a mission and email Cameron at cfairfield@cityoflakewood to claim a prize.

Activities Abound for Lakewood Kids

Lakewood is full of programs for kids.

The **Clover Park School District** and **Pierce County Library** both offer after-school programs for all ages. Programs include language clubs, book clubs, art classes, and toddler learning.

Many local religious organizations like **Young Life** and **Youth for Christ** offer youth leadership programs.

Nourish Pierce County provides food. **Caring for Kids** offers emergency food kits, winter clothes, and school supplies. The **Lindquist Dental Clinic** offers free dental care to youth in need.

The **Skyhawks** club offers a variety of sports and physical activities for kids of all ages. **Puget Sound Regional Volleyball** offers introductory camps and competitive leagues.

The **Center for Independence** offers activities and support for children with disabilities. **Communities in Schools** offers one-on-one academic help and mentoring with local students.

Find information about these programs and many more on the City of Lakewood website.

<https://cityoflakewood.us/youth/>





Rules for Roundabouts

Roundabouts have great benefits. They reduce dangerous collisions, allow more traffic to pass, and improve air quality as fewer cars must idle.

However, any road is only as safe as its drivers. Even if you are familiar, please take a moment to review **how to navigate a roundabout**:

General Tips

- **Slow down.** Roundabouts are designed for traffic going 15 to 20 mph.
- **Yield.** You must yield to drivers already in the roundabout and crossing pedestrians & cyclists.
- **Turn Right.** Turn right to enter the roundabout. If you miss your turn, keep circling.
- **Don't stop.** Once in the roundabout, you have the right-of-way. Don't stop unless necessary.
- **Don't change lanes.** Don't cut into other lanes. If you miss your turn, keep circling.
- **Signal.** It helps other drivers when you use your blinker to indicate that you are exiting.

Tips for Trains

You will notice an increase in train traffic in Lakewood. Amtrak service along the Point Defiance Bypass route resumed in November.

These passenger trains are fast; they travel at speeds up to 79 miles per hour. Be safe around train crossings, keep tracks clear, and never defy a crossing alarm.

General Tips

- **Keep Tracks Clear.** You may stop on either side of a crossing, but never stop on train tracks.
- **Leave space.** Buses and other vehicles often stop at every rail crossing, even if no train is coming. Be ready to stop. If a car in front of you stops on tracks, don't box them in.
- **Don't race a train.** When you see a crossing signal activate, stop immediately. Some trains travel much faster than you might expect.
- **Don't leave early.** Wait for the signal to deactivate before crossing. There may be a second train coming; don't risk crossing early.



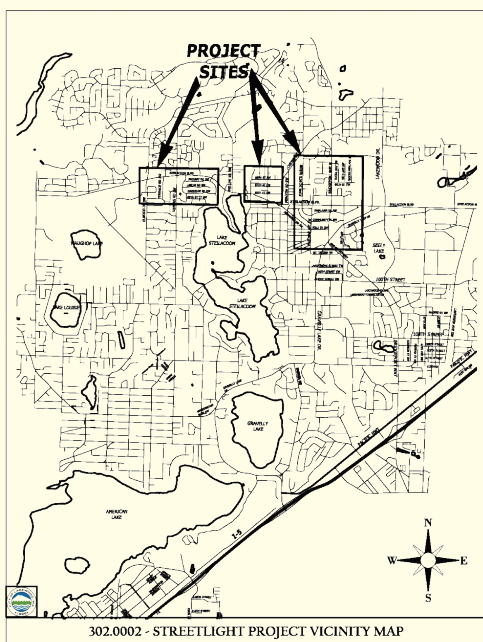


Streetlights

Well-lit roadways are safer and more pleasant for drivers and pedestrians. This year, the City is working on installing 58 new streetlights in several areas in North Lakewood.

In 2022 and 2023, streetlight installation will be concentrated near the downtown area east of Steilacoom Lake.

2021 Streetlight Installation Map



Sidewalks

Walkability is a top priority for your Public Works team. Over the last several years, sidewalks have been added to a number of arterial streets around town to better connect parts of the City for pedestrians.

The **Lake City neighborhood** saw new sidewalks added along Veterans Drive in 2020. In 2021, new sidewalks were added along Gravelly Lake Drive. In 2022, new sidewalks will be added along Washington Blvd.

In the **Lakewood Station District**, sidewalks were added and improved along 108th, 111th, and 112th Streets. Pedestrians going to and from the Sounder Station now enjoy a smoother walk and safer crossings.

Sidewalks will soon be added along **Steilacoom Blvd.** between Weller Rd. and Custer Rd. Custer Elementary School students will enjoy a safer walk to school, and local restaurants and grocery stores will be more accessible to pedestrians.

Snow & Storms

When the going gets tough, the tough get going. Our maintenance team keeps your roads safe & clear.

When snow falls or a storm rolls in, this crew hits the street and often works long hours to plow roads or clear debris.

Now that winter has begun, download the MyLakewood311 app – it's available for iOS and Android in the app store. Use the app to report flooding, slippery areas, or other street hazards.

When you see plows and street sweepers on the road, leave lots of room. Don't follow closely as powdery snow may create a whiteout. Avoid passing or turning in front of plows – just be patient and let them work.

During storms and snow events, it helps to have your car parked in your driveway so that crews may clear the street easier.

It also helps to sweep storm drains clear when you see them clogged.

Speak & Be Heard

Got Something to Say? We're Listening.

Let's talk. You probably have a lot to say about important issues like homelessness, housing affordability, and public safety. We are listening.

The new "ISSUES" section of the City's website is your place to be heard. Important issues each have their own page where you can submit your comment for the record.

You're always free to write, call, or email the City. The benefit of using the issues page is that your comment is attached to an issue.

When the City is strategizing to improve housing affordability, they can review a library of your comments.

When City Council considers equity policies, they can review a library of your comments.

When Public Works discusses where to install sidewalks or streetlights, they can review a library of your comments.

Your opinion will directly reach decision-makers as they consider policies related to each issue.

Even more important, residents with expertise on a topic can come forward and get involved with policy.

A recent example is tree code. The City is considering code amendments to protect local trees, and has invited residents with expertise in ecology to join a citizen's committee responsible for suggesting code improvements.

We know you have great ideas and well-founded opinions. We're eager to hear them.

<https://cityoflakewood.us/issues/>

Homelessness

Homelessness is a growing regional issue. Approximately 3,300 Pierce County residents live without adequate shelter.

Root causes for the crisis are numerous: economic instability, expensive housing, domestic abuse, mental health issues, addiction & substance abuse, and more.

Homelessness is not a crime – there is no cause to detain or remove the homeless.

Instead, the route to progress is through resources and programming. Upstream tactics support those at risk of homelessness before they hit the street. Downstream tactics assist those already homeless and in need of shelter.

The City made news this fall for its participation in the purchase of the Comfort Inn at 86th and Hosmer in Tacoma. The hotel will be converted to an emergency shelter and an access point for counseling.

Of the total purchase price of \$8.6 million, \$1.0 million was contributed by the City of Lakewood. Tacoma and Pierce County financed the remainder.

This is a big investment to change the math of homelessness – there fewer beds than people that need them.

While this purchase made headlines, much of the City's work to address homelessness does not.

The City funds and staffs workforce development and career training programs. The City offers assistance to

low-income renters and helps with costly home repairs when owners can't afford them. The City partners with Living Access Support Alliance (LASA) and other partners to shelter those in need.

The City also partners with Habitat for Humanity to build housing for low-income families, and works with domestic violence advocates to find shelter for displaced victims.

The best solution to homelessness is proactivity – that is Lakewood's priority.



This Comfort Inn will soon become an emergency shelter.

What's Your Opinion?

<https://cityoflakewood.us/homelessness/>

Visit the "Homelessness" issue page on the City's website and speak your mind. You might comment with:

- A link to a successful initiative by another city.
- Express support or opposition to current programs.
- Share a story about homelessness.
- Request updates on response efforts.

Crime & Safety

Residents should feel safe in Lakewood, and they also should feel that they are served by a responsive and transparent police department.

The Lakewood Police Department has reduced crime by nearly 50% since incorporation. Further, the department is committed to transparency and responsiveness to new concerns.

However, new threats and new challenges are arising. The pandemic has restricted jail bookings, so criminal

suspects are often released after arrest. New legislation has limited officers' ability to pursue and detain suspects.

Chief Zaro presented a quarterly crime report to City Council earlier this fall, and described a few concerning developments. Gun crime is up in Lakewood, mirroring national trends. The Chief also noted that suspects are fleeing arrest more often than ever.

Police work is never easy, but LPD never quits in its efforts to fight crime.



All LPD cars and officers will be outfitted with cameras.

The last several years have seen demands for transparency and reform. In response, the Lakewood Police Department equipped all patrol cars with vehicle cameras and all patrol officers will wear body cameras beginning in 2022.

Use of force is another focus of the community. Using force is never the desired outcome of an encounter with a suspect, but officers often encounter violent physical resistance and other dangerous situations that require the use of force in response.

Conversations like these are happening in every city across America.

Communities expect transparency and accountability. Police departments implore cooperation and solidarity.

These conversations can be complex, but the ultimate truth is that the community and police department share the same goal: a safe, happy Lakewood.

What's Your Opinion?

<https://cityoflakewood.us/public-safety/>

Visit the "Public Safety" issue page on the City's website and speak your mind. You might comment with:

- *Suggest opportunities for officers and residents to engage in conversation.*
- *Express support or opposition to recent legislation.*
- *Share a story about how crime has affected you.*

Climate Change

Air quality and wildlife are affected by emissions. The City is taking action to reduce emissions, sequester carbon, and brace for the effects of climate change.

One strategy to reduce emissions and sequester carbon is to protect our allies in this mission – trees. Trees capture significant carbon, improve air quality, and reduce ambient heat in the summer.

City Council is preparing to form an ad-hoc committee comprised of expert ecologists, local leaders, and residents. The goal is to engage the community and discover popular solutions to protect Lakewood's canopy of tree cover.

The task won't be easy. Tree protections may inhibit development or may upset property owners that wish to remove trees on their property. The committee's task will be to balance environmental necessity with community opinion.

Tree preservation code amendments are just one piece of the environmental puzzle.

To inform plans to address climate change, the City uses a variety of cutting edge data. Google's Environmental Insights Explorer program helps City staff estimate emissions from buildings and vehicles. Satellite data helps City staff identify floodplains that may threaten roads and highways.

The Comprehensive Plan is the City's central planning document. City Council added an Energy & Climate Change

chapter this summer, laying a foundation for future environmental planning.

Future land-use policies will reduce energy consumption, improve carbon sequestration, and adapt to expected climate disruption. Zoning for density, green building practices, and restoring ecological systems may also contribute.

Severe heat, extreme weather, flooding, draught, and biodiversity loss are all possibilities we must prepare for and do what we can to prevent.



Lakewood is home to a lush and diverse canopy of trees.

What's Your Opinion?

<https://cityoflakewood.us/environment/>

Visit the "Environment" issue page on the City's website and speak your mind. You might comment with:

- Suggest opportunities to educate people on the importance of trees or pollution prevention.
- Express support or opposition to current tactics.
- Share a story about ecology or climate change.



The Farmers Market Experiment

The Lakewood Farmers Market is a tradition that residents treasure every year, as do aspiring entrepreneurs.

The vendors that you purchase your treats and goodies from are small business owners. Their craft is their livelihood, and their dream is to succeed and scale their enterprises.

Meredith Russell, owner of Craft Theory, realized her dream earlier this year. Meredith started a small business selling arts & crafts at the Lakewood Farmers Market. Business was good - so good, she's leased a storefront along Gravelly Lake Drive. Her craft studio now has a brick-and-mortar home.

The same goes for Tea Madame. This business is another farmers market graduate, and now runs from a storefront along Steilacoom Boulevard.

Squishy Pop Bubble Tea is only just getting started. This was their first year in business operating a food truck.

Diana & Mariani, the twin sisters running the truck, report that their very first year was a very big success.

Do you own a small business and wish to expand? Call us! (253) 983-7738

The Year in Business

So far, the 2020s have been tough on businesses. Through a pandemic, economic retraction, and supply chain crisis, businesses have hung on tight to keep the doors open.

Through it all, things look good in Lakewood.

- **Development activity** in Lakewood is surging. Total permit valuation has shattered previous records. This will translate into more housing, more businesses, and a healthier economy in just a few years. Investments totaling \$160 million flowed into Lakewood in 2020, and another \$179 million has been invested in 2021 to date.
- The **Lakewood Station Subarea Plan** was made official earlier this year. The neighborhood surrounding the Sounder Station was rezoned for density surrounding the regional transit hub. Walkability, housing affordability, transit access, and the hyperlocal economy are poised to improve. The City has already processed applications for several proposed housing developments.
- The **Lakewood Landing** area will be the site of exciting developments soon. Located along the west side of South Tacoma Way south of 108th Street, a WSDOT facility will be relocated, clearing space for new housing and commerce.
- The City's **permit system** is getting an overhaul. A new online permit portal promises easier filing and faster turnaround.
- **Retail activity** looks healthy, although supply chain issues could slow revenues. Retail sales tax is up 27.4% over 2020.
- **Industrial activity** is strong. The Lakewood Industrial Park is now full. Aero Precision, an advanced manufacturing facility to employ 800+ workers, recently moved in.

Parks

Renovations at Harry Todd Park introduced new amenities and gorgeous improvements to the waterfront. Land was purchased to expand Springbrook and Wards Lake parks in 2022.

Fort Steilacoom Park received new trailheads, restrooms, and an accessible play area. A new bridge over Chambers Creek connects Lakewood and University Place by trail.

Art

A fantastic mural of waterfalls cascading down a mountainside now graces American Lake Park.

Traffic signal boxes received decorative wraps featuring fantastic artwork by local creatives. A design was approved for a future metallic gateway greeting visitors to Colonial Plaza.

Community Development

The Community & Economic Development team has been busy. The Lakewood Station District Subarea Plan was approved, a climate change chapter was added to the Comprehensive Plan, code amendments to protect trees are in the works, and reports on buildable lands, housing, and population were issued.

1,556 permits were processed this year, \$415,814 in rental assistance was distributed to families reeling from the pandemic, and 31 abatements are in process.

The team also participated in regional homelessness solutions, including the Comfort Inn purchase.

Public Works

Improvements to 108th, 111th, and 112th Streets improved walkability in the surging Lakewood Station District. Patching, sealing, overlays, and other projects have kept your roads in top shape.

Improvements to Veterans Drive wrapped up in the spring, and now JBLM North Access project is progressing through Lake City.

The Maple Street Sewer Project improved service in the Tillicum neighborhood, and our ongoing streetlight project is bringing nightlights to neighborhoods.

17 projects are planned for the next decade to keep you moving safely and speedily around town.

City Hall

The City's finance team continues its sterling record, winning a "triple crown" of awards for transparent, technically-sound financial reporting.

The City's Standard & Poor's bond rating leapt from an A rating in 2014 to an AA rating in 2018. Lakewood's good management practices and strong financial policies were factors in the upgrade.

Conservative fiscal management helped the City remain stable and solvent through the pandemic. New federal relief funds like the American Rescue Plan Act are free to be focused on community initiatives rather than budget repair.

The City's total adopted operating expenditures in 2021 totaled \$40.6 million.

Building for Better

2021 was... a year. We endured the Delta Variant, a "heat dome", and a stormy November "bomb complex". We've been through the wringer, but maybe we're stronger for it. We know that times are challenging, and every department is hard at work to make life better for you.

Public Works' cones and construction can be frustrating, but they're working to get you from A to B. Our Community & Economic Development team is bringing new commerce and investment to Lakewood, while planning for a sustainable future. Your City Council is listening, and working to deliver on your demands.

We are all proud to work for you, Lakewood. From every City Hall staffer to you and your family: Happy Holidays.



City of Lakewood, Washington

A colorful October gave way to a stormy November, and now a chilly and festive December awaits us. The holidays are here. Despite the darker days and frosty air, this time of year still brings a warm feeling. Bring some hot cocoa in the car with you as you tour the Holiday Parade of Lights in Fort Steilacoom Park on Saturday, December 11th. Visit our festive City Hall Christmas tree on display on Main Street. No matter how you celebrate the holidays, we wish you joy and hope in the company of your family.

Save The Date

Holiday Light Parade

Saturday, Dec. 11

4:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Fort Steilacoom Park

Keep In Touch

<https://cityoflakewood.us/communications/>



A Lakewood family tours the Holiday Parade of Lights at last year's event. Say... Is that baby licensed to drive?